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IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

SERIAL NO.: 09/325,533 ART UNIT: 2771

APPLICANTS: Michael D. Hitchcock, James H. Wolfston, John W. Stedman, and
Andree J. Hertz

EXAMINER: Sanjiv Shah

FILING DATE: June 3, 1999

TITLE: Universal Forms Engine

DECLARATION

Commissioner for Patents
Washington, D.C. 20231

1. I, James H. Wolfston, am one of the inventors named on the above-identified patent application. I am also the President of CollegeNET, Inc., the assignee of the application.

2. I understand that in accordance with the Manual of Patent Examining Procedure Section 2004, paragraph 11, it "may be desirable to submit information about prior uses and sales even if it appears that they may have been experimental, not involve the specifically claimed invention, or not encompass a completed invention."

3. I, therefore, wish to apprise the Examiner of a computer program, referred to as "ApplyWeb I," that the assignee executed on an Internet server more than one year before the priority date of the present application.

4. The ApplyWeb I program was placed on the Internet around September 1995.

5. The ApplyWeb I program theoretically had the ability to share data between applications to different institutions. Only a relatively small number of applications were

processed using ApplyWeb I, and to the best of my knowledge, no student used ApplyWeb I to complete more than a single application and no data sharing actually took place.

6. The ApplyWeb I program, though functional, was found to be too inflexible to provide the customized application format and customized data processing uploads required by the participating institutions. We developed the present invention to overcome the limitations of ApplyWeb I.

7. In using the ApplyWeb I program, a student requested a college application over the Internet from a server. A single page application form was delivered to the student. The ApplyWeb I program was not capable of creating and processing multiple page forms. The student completed the form, and posted it to the server.

8. After receipt at the server, the applicant information was stored in a flat text file. In the ApplyWeb I program, no applicant information was stored in a relational database.

9. No metadata, that is, information about the data fields, was stored in ApplyWeb I. Hence, ApplyWeb I was incapable of performing data checking.

10. Each college admission application was "hard-coded" and any changes to an application form required rewriting the program that generated the form. Although the software program for the application for each school was written separately, the programs used common modules, such as boxes specifying extra curricular activities. These common modules needed to be identical from form to form for compatibility.

11. ApplyWeb I did not maintain a "state" for an application and could not, therefore, determine whether an application was in process, complete, or transmitted to the school.

12. ApplyWeb 1 could not process the applicant information to put it into a form specified by the college. The flat text file of applicant data was sent via electronic mail to the institution to which the application was addressed.

13. If the Examiner needs any additional information with regard to the ApplyWeb I program, please contact applicants' representative and he will provide whatever additional information is necessary.

14. I hereby declare that all statements made herein of my own knowledge are true and that all statements made on information and belief are believed to be true; and further that these statements were made with the knowledge that willful false statements and the like so made are punishable by fine or imprisonment, or both, under 18 U.S.C. 1001 and that such willful false statements may jeopardize the validity of the application or any patent issued thereon.


James H. Wolfston

OCT 12, 2001
Date